Great Britain's

TEARS,

Humbly offered to the

Consideration

OF THE

LORDS and COMMONS

in Parliament Assembled.

Crosfield (R.) 12

London, Printed in the Year 1695.

To the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, and Commons in Parliament Assembled.

IF we look into the World, and but view the Actions of Men, and see what violent Oppression there is of the Poor, and the eager pursuit after Riches; we shall be apt to conclude Men are become lunatick, or infected with the gross Errors of the Sadduces of old: otherways one would think they would never dare to break through the Laws of God and Man at the rate they do; so much the more, considering the Nation has so lately receiv'd such a signal Deliverance, and hath ever since been in imminent Peril: yet these things have made no Impression on the Minds of some Men, but only serv'd to heighten and encrease their Ambition and Covetousness, which hath been the occasion of many Evils, for which the Land mourns, as will appear by the ensuing Matter; but it must with all due Acknowledgment be confest, that in Parliament there hath been all imaginable Care taken to prevent Frauds, and the Imbezlement of the Publick Money (but all hath not been sufficient). Yet there hath been one thing wanting, that is, the inspecting into the Actions of the Court, from whence the greatest of our Evils have sprung: Our Fore-fathers ever look'd upon them with a jealous Eye, as being sensible what Temptations they lay under, and what great Opportunities they had of inriching

themſelves (eſpecially in the time of War) to the Prejudice of the Nation, and how prone and apt they were to purſue their own Intereſt, notwithſtanding their great Pretenſions to Loyalty; and this is certainly a ſore and great Evil the Nation now labours under: Therefore vain and fruitleſs will all Endeavours be, as long as there's ſo many great and various Corruptions in the Government; and we can expect nothing but Poverty and Miſery to attend. There are many Inſtances both in Holy Writ and Hiſtory, wherein God hath been pleaſed to make uſe of weak and mean Inſtruments for the bringing his Purpoſes to paſs; and finding a general Silence, the ſenſe of my Duty, and the Apprehenſion how fatal theſe things may prove to the Kingdom, is that which hath made me thus preſume to addreſs my ſelf to this moſt Auguſt Aſſembly, from whom alone it is (under God) the Nation can expect Relief. We are happy in a good Prince, who will deny nothing that's fit for good Subjects to ask, and who will be very ready and willing to remove all Grievances, or any thing elſe that may obſtruct the Glory of his Actions, or the happy Settlement of the Kingdom in Peace.

I am, my Lords and Gentlemen, your Honours moſt humble, faithful and obedient Servant,

Robert Crosfeild.

GREAT

GREAT BRITAIN's Tears.

THIS Nation hath long lain under a great and dangerous War, His Majeſty's Royal Perſon expos'd to the greateſt Hazards, and vaſt Sums of Money rais'd for carrying on the ſame; yet we have not made uſe of thoſe Opportunities God hath put into our Hands of improving them to the Advantage of the Kingdom, but have all along taken quite different Meaſures from what our Fore-fathers have done under the like Circumſtances of Affairs: which is obvious and plain to the Eye of any intelligible Man; and there's a general Complaint thereof through the Kingdom, but I find none inquiſitive after the Cauſes from whence theſe Evils ſhould ariſe: therefore I conceive it would highly conduce to His Majeſty's and the Nation's Intereſt if we could diſcover the Fountain from whence they ſpring, which I ſhall endeavour to do, and hope my Labour will not be altogether in vain, but ſhall forbear all Perſonal Reflections, as knowing many honeſt and worthy Perſons may be engaged, who have not been able to withſtand the Current and Courſe of things, but been oblig'd to go with the Stream; neither preſs harder upon any, than what the natural Conſtruction may be upon ſuch and ſuch Actions. And when the Kingdom is engaged in War, all Men well know, that the great Affairs of the Kingdom paſs through the Hands of the Right Honourable the Lords Commiſſioners of the Treaſury, the Admiralty,

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and the Commiſſioners of the Navy ; and ſo long as the War's on foot, it makes thoſe Employments (as likewiſe many others at Court) much more advantagious than in the times of Peace, and it muſt be allowed they have a very great Influence upon the Government; ſo that as they are inclin'd they may be the Authors of much Good or Evil. By which it appears of what mighty Importance it is to the Happineſs and Well-being of the Kingdom, to have Perſons of Honour and Integrity in thoſe Stations, to whom his Majeſty commits ſo great a Truſt: we can no ways better judg of things preſent, than by looking back to thoſe which are paſt; and it can be no Crime (but a Duty) in me to make ſome Inſpection into the Publick Actions of the Nation during this War.

God, among many other Bleſſings, hath ſurrounded us with the Sea, as with a Wall, (whereby we are not expos'd to the Inſults of the common Enemy and the Oppreſſor) and hath alſo given us great and numerous Shipping, more than ever our Fore-fathers could boaſt of, who notwithſtanding perform'd great Actions, (which ſounded into all Parts of the World) and by the Power thereof, for many Ages gave Law to *Europe*, and were properly and truly the Ballance thereof. Now it's highly worth the Enquiry to ſee whether we have followed their Footſteps, and made a right Uſe of that Bleſſing we have and do enjoy; and upon View it will be found that we have fallen far ſhort of their Actions, and greatly blemiſh'd the Glory of them; which cannot be attributed to our Puſianimity, (for the ſame Native Courage remains) but to other Cauſes, which I ſhall endeavour to demonſtrate, and then leave the Nation to judg.

Upon the firſt breaking out of this War, his Majeſty by his great Prudence and Induſtry, had drawn moſt of the conſiderable Kingdoms and States of *Europe* into an

Alliance,

Alliance, thereby to put a ſtop to the growing Greatneſs of the French King, and has to the higheſt degree expos'd his Royal Perſon to the greateſt of Dangers; and by reaſon of this Alliance (hardly to be parallel'd) gave this Nation a mighty Opportunity of humbling that proud Monarch, who (by reaſon of drawing ſo great Armies into the Field) could not ſpare any great number of Troops for the Guard of his Maritime Coaſt; by which means it lay expos'd, and we might have done him infinite Damage, and committed great Spoil and Waſte, which had not poſſibly been in his Power to have prevented; for where there's a commanding Fleet at Sea, and a competent Army on Board ready to make a Deſcent when and where they ſhall ſee fit, (and not ſend Men to a Slaughter-houſe) it could no way poſſibly be in the Power of the Enemy to prevent their landing, and making great Depradations, before they could draw a Strength together able to oppoſe them; but yet before that could be done, they might (if they ſaw it requiſite) retire and be gone: by ſuch like means the Enemy might have been driven to the greateſt Extremity; and this hath always been the Opinion and Practice of all Ages and Nations that have been ſtrong at Sea.

But unhappy poor *England*, during this War, has fallen from the common Notions of Men, and at that time when in the greateſt Danger! and this hath not only been an Error of one Year or two, but many: Nay, have we not ſeen the Enemy's Fleet in the *Straits*, and their Coaſt left naked, (their Troops being drawn to the Siege of *Charleroy*) and we at the ſame time lay with a great Fleet almoſt all the Summer in *Torbay*, and yet made no Attempt upon their Coaſt? Let us but ſuppoſe we had lain under the ſame Circumſtance: What a miſerable Condition we ſhould have been in, we may judg by what a

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Conſternation the Nation was in the laſt Summer, for fear the French Fleet ſhould be out before ours. It's ſeen the *Venetians* can make a good uſe of their Shipping, as appears by their taking the *Morea*, *Ciclut* and *Scio*: and why not we, who are able to perform greater Actions than they are capable of? And no doubt we might and ſhould have done it, had we not been prevented through the ſordid Covetouſneſs of ſome Perſons, who, to enrich themſelves, have baſely kept the Nation in a lingring War. This will not appear to be a hard and unjuſt Cenſure, when I have laid open what I have further to offer. The next thing therefore I ſhall proceed upon ſhall be, to enquire how it came to paſs that there were Embargo's laid upon Shipping from Year to Year for ſeveral Years together, to the great Prejudice of His Majeſty and the whole Kingdom. Some Men did and do conjecture that it was carried on by Intereſt, and to ſatisfy the avaritious Temper of ſome Perſons belonging to the Admiralty, (for it brought vaſt Sums of Money to their Hands) and their Opinion in that matter ſeems to be juſtly grounded; for being done (as before is ſaid) for ſeveral Years, there muſt have been ſome very urgent Cauſe for ſo doing, and none ſo great as the King's want of Men (as indeed nothing elſe could be rendred a ſufficient Cauſe for ſo violent an Action, and of ſo pernicious Conſequence to the King and Kingdom.) The ſame Cauſe ſtill remains, and hath been all this laſt Summer more preſſing than ever; yet we ſee there has been no Embargo laid: You will then ſay, How comes there to be ſo great a Change? It was becauſe the laſt Seſſion of Parliament this Matter was exploded and laid open (by me) in Print, how pernicious the laying Embargo's was to his Majeſty's and the Kingdom's Intereſt, and undeniable Reaſons given to prove, that there was no manner of Cauſe for ſo doing; which

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in ſhort overthrew that Buſineſs, and the Nation has heard no more of it ſince.

And there hath been Application made to the Lords of the Admiralty, wherein has been laid open what vile Corruptions were and are committed in his Majeſty's Yards, in the Imbezlement of his Majeſty's Stores, and the great Deſtruction made of Timber and Plank in the building and repairing the Royal Navy, and the irregular Proceedings in the ſaid Yards; which hath amounted to vaſt Sums of Money which might have been ſav'd: and the Matter has had the Approbation of almoſt all Perſons that have ſeen it; but notwithſtanding this has made no Impreſſion on their Lordſhips, who have delay'd the Perſon that made the Propoſal, but promis'd him from time to time to bring his Matter to an Iſſue, but never perform'd it. The Commiſſioners of the Navy (to whom it was referr'd) treated the Propoſer rudely, and never would make a juſt Report of the Matter to them referr'd, but endeavour'd to evade and ridicule what they were not able to anſwer or confute. This Affair hath lain for near this two Years, and lies ſtill undetermined, altho it be of ſuch vaſt Importance to the King and Kingdom; and there are ſeventeen have made Oath of theſe things, who are no looſe idle Perſons, but Men living in good Repute, that have even an Horror upon them to conſider that theſe things are practiſed: and thoſe that do it are countenanced and ſupported in it by thoſe who ſhould redreſs them, and which might have been long ſince done, and may yet this Seſſion of Parliament (if honeſt Men are imploy'd) by appropriating ſuch a Sum of Money to that very uſe, and making a borrowing Clauſe, by which means there would be ready Money to pay the Workmen; the want of which is alledged to be the great Cauſe of all theſe Abuſes: then that Money that hath been hitherto ſo baſely waſted and

miſpent, may be imploy'd towards the Payment of the Sailers, whoſe Caſe truly is very deplorable, and would even move a ſtony Heart to Compaſſion; who are made a Prey of on every hand, I need not particularize wherein, it having been already done by others, and it's no more than what's generally known: but it's contrary to common Policy and Honeſty to oppreſs Men to ſuch a degree, who are of ſuch great uſe to the Publick; and no doubt their Sighs and Tears have long ſince pierced the Clouds, and call aloud to Heaven for Vengeance, and there's no one Sin whatever ſooner brings Judgments upon a Nation, than the violent Oppreſſion of the Poor. His Majeſty hath been graciouſly pleaſed to iſſue out his Royal Proclamation for to encourage the Sailers to come into his Service, by giving them three Months Pay advance, which I wiſh may have the deſired Effect: but there's little appearance of it; for it's frequently ſeen, that the Sailers leave their Ships many times when they have ſix or nine Months Pay due to them: the Promiſe therefore of three Months Advance cannot be a ſufficient Inducement for them to come into the Service; the reaſon of it is, becauſe they are as it were eaten up by others; and we ſee that even a Dog will ſhun that Room in which he has been often beat: therefore it's no wonder the Sailers have ſo great an Averſion to the Publick Service; and as they are Men and Rational Creatures they will always decline it as long as they are ſo ill treated. Therefore until the Cauſe be remov'd, the Effects will never ceaſe; but theſe Regulations muſt not be expected to come from the Admiralty or Navy-board, unleſs a Reform be firſt made among them. His Majeſty of his Princely Compaſſion hath been pleas'd to recommend the Sailers Caſe to the Parliament, and many Propoſals have been offer'd, whereby to encourage and enduce them to come into his Service: among others ſome have propos'd to regiſter them in the

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ſeveral Ports, with ſuch Clauſes and Reſtrictions, as may oblige them to it: but I humbly conceive all of thoſe Methods will be found to be defective, and not anſwer the End thereby intended; for there muſt not be a ſtop put to our outward or coaſting Trade: ſo that if a Sailer comes to enter himſelf on Board any of theſe Ships, he may take what Name he pleaſes upon him, or at leaſt name a wrong Port to which he belongs, (which the Maſter will wink at, if he knows it, rather than want Men) and he cannot eaſily be confuted in either; and Recourſe muſt be made to the Regiſter upon the account of every Ship that moves, which will be endleſs and uncertain; and withal, it will be found to be as difficult and as unlikely to make the Sailers regular, as to tame a wild Bull: ſo that at laſt his Majeſty will be oblig'd to impreſs Men as formerly: Therefore there muſt be ſome better Method taken than theſe. In ſhort, if the Sailers be juſtly paid, and their Wages ſomewhat advanced, and better Proviſion made for them in caſe they are wounded or maim'd, then his Majeſty will never want Men, tho there be no impreſſing them, which I humbly conceive may be done by theſe means.

That all Coaſters whatever of an hundred Tun, do pay 1 s. each Voyage they ſhall make, and ſo proportionable according to the Burden of each Ship; and all outward-bound Shipping to pay agreeable to their Burden and Voyage, according to the Propoſal I made the laſt Seſſion of Parliament; this Money to be employ'd only to the Uſe and Benefit of ſuch Sailers as ſhall be wounded or maim'd in the Publick Service, which may be collected without any Charge; and this to continue as well in Peace as War, which would fully anſwer all the Ends propoſed: and if it be charged upon Sailers and Bottom, (as the Parliament ſhall ſee fit) neither of them would grumble at it; or if it be charged only upon the Sailers, there's none of them would

grudg to pay it, by reaſon it's ſo ſmall a matter, and they know not how ſoon they may be in his Majeſty's Service; then if they have the Misfortune to be maim'd they are ſure to be provided for; the very Apprehenſion of which will make all Sailers extream willing to pay the Money.

And as the Affair may be order'd, it may be of good uſe to ſuch of them as may happen to be wounded on Board Merchant Ships: As for Inſtance,

The Lame Hoſpitals of this Town do admit into them many ſick, poor and lame Perſons; but in caſe there happens any Action at Sea, whereby many Sailers are wounded, then thoſe poor Perſons are turn'd out, and forc'd to make room for the Sailers; yet notwithſtanding it muſt be allow'd that the Poor receive great Relief from the ſaid Hoſpitals: ſo by the ſame Rule may Sailers that are wounded or maim'd on board Merchant-men be reliev'd by this, as things may be order'd by the great Wiſdom and Prudence of the Parliament; and without all doubt it would be a great Inducement to many thouſands of Men to take to the Sea more than now do, and it would be greatly to the Honour and Intereſt of the Nation. And if after all, it ſhall be found his Majeſty muſt have recourſe to a Preſs, then no doubt a Land-Preſs will be the moſt effectual, that is, to take up the Sailers in all the out-Ports by the Cuſtom-houſe Officers (with the Aſſiſtance of the Conſtables, *&c.*) who generally know the Sailers, and not by the Preſs-Ketches, which is but an abſurd way, altho antient, and kept on foot only by Intereſt, (upon the ſight of which the Sailers abſcond) which the Ports look upon little better than Enemies, as being Obſtructers to their Trade and Buſineſs; ſo upon that account they would be very willing to aſſiſt in a Land-Preſs (which may be done by Letter) that ſo they may not be plagu'd by the Preſs-Ketches. This had been long ſince done, only it's againſt the Intereſt

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of the Admiralty; therefore it can never be expected they will promote it, but (under-hand) oppoſe it to the uttermoſt of their Power; but at the ſame time they forget the great Duty and Obligations they lie under: but what ſhall we ſay? Intereſt is the God that ſome Men worſhip. And if once a Publick and National Intereſt comes to be but heartily and ſincerely eſpouſed, (and not be forc'd to truckle to the Intrigues and Deſigns of private Perſons, as it hath done hitherto) then no doubt but this Matter will take place, becauſe all Perſons that are likely to be concern'd in the Payment of the Money will be ſo ready and willing to part with it.

I ſhall now give ſome ſhort Account of a Matter I propos'd to the Right Honourable the Lords of the Treaſury, for laying aſide all the Receiver-Generals for the Land-Tax, as being a great and unneceſſary Charge to the Government, which I ſhew'd to many Perſons of eminent Quality, who very well approv'd on it; yet however their Lordſhips would never ſo much as vouchſafe me a hearing: and when I petition'd his Majeſty in Council that I might be heard, I was there obſtructed, and my Petition not ſuffered to be read; but I find it's not my caſe alone, for there are four or five hundred Petitions now lying at the Council-Board, which are ſtifled and not ſuffered to be read. It cannot be judg'd that the Clerks of the Council dare to act ſo great a piece of Impudence of themſelves, but they muſt be ſupported in it by ſome Perſons of greater Quality, which I conceive to be a Crime of the greateſt Magnitude; for thereby his Majeſty is depriv'd of the true Knowledg and State of his Affairs, the Corruption and Abuſes that creep into the Government, and the Oppreſſion his Subjects lie under; and by theſe means there's no poſſibility of Redreſs ſo long as this Bar remains, which is an Act of the greateſt Injuſtice: but thoſe Proceedings

ceedings are diametrically oppoſite to his Majeſty's Goodneſs, and tend to nothing but Ruin: All theſe Evils happen and come to paſs by there being a predominate Party at Court that ſeek themſelves, and not the Nation's Good, (being Slaves to their own Luſts) and who govern Affairs as they pleaſe.

Therefore ſo long as they are in Power, there can be little reaſon to expect his Majeſty's Affairs ſhould proſper, or the Nation be ſucceſsful in what ſhall be undertaken; for they by Intereſt and Policy will ſo clog the Wheel of Publick Affairs, that we ſhall even remain in the ſame State we were in when we firſt began.

I have one Matter more to offer, (in which I ſhall be very brief) and do declare I can make appear, that there have been two or three hundred thouſand Pounds of the publick Money imbezled, and in whoſe Hands it now remains, (this doth no ways relate to any thing by me before publiſh'd) if the Parliament will be pleaſed but to take the ſame Methods that are uſually taken in the like caſes; and then if I do not prove what I aſſert, let me be puniſhed as an Impoſtor and Incendiary.

I know it will be affirm'd by what I have done, that I tax his Majeſty with want of Prudence and Conduct: I deny the Aſſertion; for the Glory of his Actions ſhine ſo bright through the whole courſe of his Life, that even the worſt of his Enemies cannot do it; but this I preſume to ſay, That Princes do both ſee and hear with other Mens Eyes and Ears: And his Majeſty by reaſon of his long Abſence, hath not had leiſure to inſpect into things, his time being wholly taken up in weighty Affairs; ſo that he hath (in great meaſure) been obliged to rely upon the Honour and Juſtice of others: therefore what Error may have been committed, or Corruptions crept into the Government, they can no ways be imputed to his Majeſty.

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And I think it's now very evident, that the Kingdom is highly oppreſt, and as it were fetter'd with its own Corruptions, that it cannot exert its Strength, and proſecute the War with that Vigor it might; but yet it ſeems to be huſh'd aſleep and fallen into a deep Lethargy of Security in the midſt of Danger: And our Church and Nation, which has been the Glory and Bulwark of the Proteſtant Religion, is like to ſink under the Weight of its own Corruptions. For if we will but look and examine into the Cauſes of the Decay and Downfal of the great Empires and Kingdoms that have been in the World, and are now extinct, we ſhall find their Ruin principally owing to their own Wickedneſs; and what reaſon have we to expect God ſhould be more merciful to us than others, to whom he has given a greater Light and Knowledg, and ſav'd as it were as a Brand out of the Fire? Theſe Mercies we have received will only ſerve to heighten our Guilt, and increaſe our Puniſhment; and it's ſeen by Experience we know not how to prize Mercies (as we ought) till we are depriv'd of them, as does appear in the Death of the late incomparable Princeſs, the Queen's moſt excellent Majeſty, who was the Glory of her Sex, and of whom this Nation was not worthy; and I fear her Loſs to be but the Fore-runner of greater Evils.

For when there's a violent Oppreſſion of the Poor in a Land, and great Enormities committed that have an apparent Tendency to Ruin, and that theſe are laid open to the view of the World, (it matters not by what Hand) and notwithſtanding all this, theſe Evils ſhall continue and not be redreſt; then in ſuch a caſe they become National Sins, for which God certainly will viſit with the Rod of his Anger. It has always been the Practice of our Forefathers (who have carefully tranſmitted down to us our Religion and Law) in Parliament, to look and inſpect into the

the Actions of the Court (even in the times of Peace) to correct and puniſh ſuch Miniſters they found to be corrupt or deficient in their Duty, of which we have almoſt infinite Examples, and yet at the ſame time it was never thought in the leaſt to be a Diminution to the Honour of their Prince.

Therefore how much does it behove the Nation to rouze it ſelf, and conſider the Peril it now lies under? Are our Religion, Laws and Liberties valuable? then let us ſhew a Courage and Reſolution anſwerable to the Danger we are in; and, in the Name of God, take ſuch Meaſures as tend to their Preſervation, by rooting out thoſe Corruptions that are in the Government. Then may we have ſome hope and proſpect of a Bleſſing; otherways I fear the time will come, that we ſhall call and cry unto the Almighty for Help when he will not hear us, but denounce that heavy Judgment upon us he did to the Jews by the Prophet *Ezekiel*, as may be ſeen in the 24*th* Chapter and the 13*th* and 14*th* Verſes.

In thy Filthineſs is Lewdneſs: becauſe I have purged thee, and thou waſt not purged, thou ſhalt not be purged from thy Filthineſs any more, till I have cauſed my Fury to reſt upon thee.

I the Lord have ſpoken it, it ſhall come to paſs, and I will do it; I will not go back, neither will ſpare, neither will I repent: according to thy Way, and according to thy Doings ſhall they judg thee, ſaith the Lord God.

FINIS.